



WHITEBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Learning, Respect and Responsibility

WHS Attendance

Plan, Policy and Procedures

Days missed = years lost

A day here and there doesn't seem like much, but...

When your child misses just...

they miss weeks per year

and years over their school life

1 day per fortnight
 = **4** weeks  = Over **1** year missed

1 day per week
 = **8** weeks  = Over **2.5** years missed

education.nsw.gov.au

Whitebridge High School supports and implements the NSW Department of Education School Attendance Policy PD/2005/0259/V07, available at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0259> This policy should be read in the context of The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A summary and consolidation of policy (1997) and the Memorandum Enhanced Enrolment Procedures (Intranet only).

Whitebridge High School recognises regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students and encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility.

Every day counts, as regular attendance helps students to:

- develop a sense of belonging
- develop and maintain friendships
- be more engaged at school
- progress with their learning
- be more aware of career and life options.

Supporting positive school attendance is a shared responsibility - everyone has a role.

DoE AIM

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that all students are regularly attending school and that effective procedures are in place to monitor attendance patterns of students. These procedures have been developed to demonstrate the school's compliance with school attendance requirements for compulsory school-aged students as outlined by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training.

RATIONALE

Section 22 of the Education Act 1990 states that it is the duty of care of the parent of a child of compulsory school age to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or to be registered for home schooling with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.

Whitebridge High School encourages students to achieve to the best of their abilities. Therefore, it is expected that all students take full advantage of their educational opportunities, including regular attendance, completion of all set work and consistently working to their full potential. Encouraging attendance is a core school responsibility.

Section 24 of the Act requires Principals to maintain an attendance register in a form approved by the Minister and be available for inspection during school hours by an authorised person.

According to Departmental policy:

Parents are responsible for:

- Enrolling their children of compulsory school age in a government or registered non-government school or registering them with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for home schooling and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.
- Ensuring that their children attend school regularly
- Explaining the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven days of the first day of any period of absence to the school
- Taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children

Students are responsible for:

- Attending school regularly
- Attending all scheduled lessons
- Informing classroom teachers when they are involved in the activities in that teachers lesson time
- Handing in all notes provided by parents/caregivers relating to absences

School staff are responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by:

- Providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community
- Recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance
- Maintaining accurate records of student attendance
- Implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise
- Providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that they:

- Provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- Ensure the school has effective measures in place to monitor and follow up student absences.
- Or their delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and within two school days of an absence being unexplained, if contact has not already been made. An absence is unexplained if parents have failed to provide an explanation to the school within 7 days.
- Are responsible for ensuring that attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students.
- Must ensure that for students with attendance concerns, the learning and support needs of those students are addressed in consultation with parents.
- are responsible for ensuring that when frequent absences are explained as being due to illness

that:

- consultation occurs with parents regarding the health care needs of the student.
- medical certificates are sought for the absences.
- where there are ongoing concerns, approval is sought from parents to contact the student's doctor so the school has all relevant information regarding the student's health care needs.
- strategies are developed to ensure regular attendance at school.
- Must ensure that school staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school.
- must ensure that any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for a student:
 - consideration is given to the requirements of the Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy
 - all required reports are made to the Community Services Child Protection Helpline or contact made with the Child Wellbeing Unit (as required by the Mandatory Reporter Guide).

The Principal has the authority to:

- grant sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
- accept other explanations for absence and record the absence as "L"
- decline to accept an explanation for absence and record the absence as unjustified
- grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student provided certain conditions are met (See the Exemption from School - Procedures).
- grant part-day exemptions from school for periods totalling up to 100 days in a twelve month period (See the Exemption from School - Procedures).
- grant exemption from enrolment for students who have completed year 9 and have the required approval to complete their education in special circumstances through an apprenticeship or traineeship (See the Exemption from School - Procedures).

COMPLUSORY SCHOOLING

Parents or carers of children of compulsory school age are responsible for ensuring their child attends school every day. Children must commence school by age 6 and then complete year 10.

After Year 10 and until they turn 17, students must be:

- in school or registered for home schooling or
- in approved education or training (e.g. TAFE, traineeship, apprenticeship) or
- in full-time, paid employment (average 25 hours/week) or
- in a combination of work, education and/or training.

Enrolled students 17 years and over are required to attend school regularly to meet Higher School Certificate course requirements.

[NSW Department of Education Compulsory School Attendance Information](#)

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Parents of children from Kindergarten to Year 12 must ensure their children attend school every day. On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

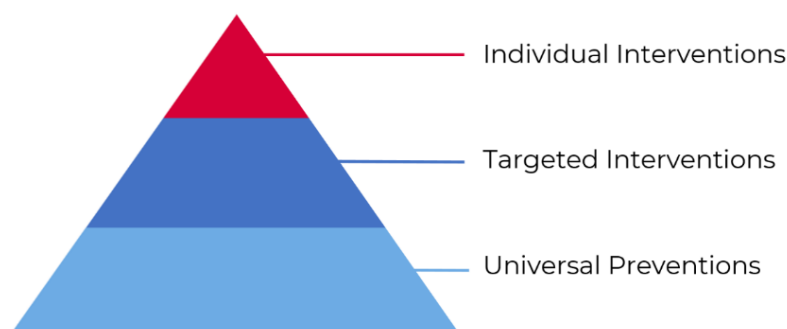
- being sick or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstances e.g. attending a funeral.

Parents must provide an explanation for absences to the school within 7 days from the first day of any period of absence. Where an explanation has not been received within the 7-day timeframe, the school will record the absence as unjustified on the student's record.

WHS ATTENDANCE INTERVENTIONS

School based attendance support

Whole school attendance modelled on a tiered framework of support and intervention and tailored to the school community, creates a positive environment for engagement and learning.



This tiered approach supports schools to:

- foster regular attendance by establishing a positive and welcoming school culture for all students
- address attendance concerns by identifying and providing targeted strategies for students or cohorts needing more support
- re-engage students with learning by providing tailored interventions for students with significant support needs.

An effective approach is informed by an understanding of the school community and the underlying factors influencing attendance; using school data and evidence to enable early identification, and implementing appropriate strategies and levels of support.

AFFIRMATION - 95-100%

- Monitor and reinforce importance of regular student attendance with students
- Regularly promote the importance and benefits of regular attendance in school communication
- Develop positive teacher-student relationships
- Implement a range of both formal and informal methods to celebrate excellent attendance
- Monitor attendance data for signs of slippage with regard to attendance rates

PROACTIVE – 90%-94%

- Monitor and reinforce importance of regular student attendance with students
- Regularly promote the importance and benefits of regular attendance in school communications
- Develop positive teacher-student relationships
- Implement a range of both formal and informal methods to celebrate excellent attendance
- Regular monitoring of attendance data for signs of slippage with regard to attendance rates and make contact with student/parent if attendance level drops

TIER 1 INTERVENTIONS – 80%-89%

- Collaboratively work with student and parent/carer to understand the underlying factors contributing to non-attendance such as Literacy/numeracy, learning needs, disability, EAL/D (E.g. Interviews, direct correspondence, regular parent updates on attendance rates)
- Monitor and reinforce importance of regular student attendance with students & intervene if signs of slippage
- Regularly promote the importance and benefits of regular attendance with parents of identified students
- Develop positive teacher-student relationships – consider allocating an attendance mentor
- Implement a range of both formal and informal methods to celebrate attendance improvement
- Regular parent update on attendance rate until at or above 90%

TIER 2 INTERVENTIONS – 50%-79%

- Senior executive collaboratively works with student and parent/carer to understand the underlying factors contributing to non-attendance such as literacy/numeracy, learning needs, disability, EAL/D (E.g. Interviews, direct correspondence, weekly parent updates on attendance rates)
- Implement an attendance contract with students and parents/carers
- Senior executive monitor and reinforce importance of regular student attendance with students and parents/carers
- Regularly promote the importance and benefits of regular attendance with parents of identified students
- Referral to learning support team (or equivalent) and allocate an attendance/learning mentor
- Implement a range of both formal and informal methods to encourage attendance improvement
- Given the individual circumstances of each child and the reasons provided for absence, consider a mandatory report regarding educational Neglect
- Seek attendance support program advice or referral

TIER 3 INTERVENTIONS – 0%-49%

- Principal collaboratively works with their DEL, student and parent/carer to understand the underlying factors contributing to non-attendance such as literacy/numeracy, learning needs, disability, EAL/D (E.g. Interviews, direct correspondence, weekly parent updates on attendance rates)
- Delivery Support team coordination: Eg. Attendance support program referral (ASLO/HSLO), NSF, Learning & Wellbeing staff, NDIS Coordinator, AP Learning & Support, ACLO, Senior Psychologist, support teachers transition, behaviour specialists, OOHC teachers, NGOs.
- Implement an attendance contract with students and parents/carers
- Regularly promote the importance and benefits of regular attendance with parents of identified students
- Referral to learning support team (or equivalent) and allocate an attendance/learning mentor
- Implement a range of both formal and informal methods to encourage attendance improvement
- Given the individual circumstances of each child and the reasons provided for absence, consider a mandatory report regarding educational Neglect.

Attendance support program

Attendance support program staff provide direct assistance to schools for attendance matters. with schools and their students, families and communities, to promote attendance.

Schools are able to apply for attendance support, based on the needs of their school, including:

- whole school strategy support and school planning
- cohort support
- individual student support.

Applying for attendance support

Before applying for attendance support, schools are encouraged to consider strategies and interventions appropriate to the underlying cause and school context that may assist with non-attendance concerns.

The current [application process for this support is the application for home school liaison program support External link \(PDF 163KB\)](#).

All applications are considered by the attendance support program manager. If approved, an attendance support officer will work with the school on strategies to improve attendance.

WHS PROCEDURE/IMPLEMENTATION for whole day absences

- **STUDENT** All enrolled students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. It is also an expectation that students arrive for the commencement of their lesson. This may not be the beginning of the school day, as some senior students have flexible learning hours.
- **ROLL CALL** at Whitebridge High School, at the beginning of Period 1 lesson each day. This is entered in SENTRAL and is the official school roll and indicates a student's daily attendance.
- Attendance data will be reviewed by Head Teacher Wellbeing each week and presented at Executive meetings. Students of concern will be contacted by the Head Teacher Wellbeing or member of the LST Team. Both partial and whole school absences will be monitored.
- Students must have a valid reason for not attending (these are outlined under Approved Absences).
- Absence from school must be explained within 7 days.
- Absence from school can be explained by presenting a letter of explanation at the front office, email (whitebridg-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au), via the SENTRAL Parent Portal, a reply text to SMS or phone call from the parent or carer (49433966).
- Parents or carers will be notified of unexplained absence from school either by SMS or email within 24hrs of absence.
- In cases in which attendance is a major concern, the parents/carers, Head Teacher Wellbeing, a Deputy Principal and the Home School Liaison Officers (HSLO) will be involved in the development of a student attendance plan. When attendance is of concern, the school will initiate communication with the parent / carer and attendance monitoring procedures will be implemented. This may require a referral for HSLO support.

APPROVED ABSENCES

- Absences covered by a medical certificate.
- A student being sent home sick from school.
- Attendance at a medical appointment, including dentist.
- Approved School excursion or sporting event.
- Suspension.
- Notification by phone or a signed note by the parent/carers explaining the reason for the absence (illness, family trauma, etc.)

ATTENDANCE PROTOCOLS

- Students who leave the School for an approved appointment or activity must sign out.
- If the student returns, they must sign back in.
- Students must not leave the school grounds during the school day. They must actively engage in meaningful school activities in the Senior Learning Hub.
- Teachers are to monitor attendance and advise Head Teachers of concerns, after initially making home contact themselves. Head teachers should contact Year Advisors and the relevant Deputy Principal, should they have further concerns.
- Where attendance issues are not resolved a referral to the SLST should be made by the CRT / HT

When parents/carers know their son or daughter will be absent from school, they should ring and:

- Identify themselves as the parent/carers of the student,
- Advise the name and school year of the student, and
- Advise the reason for the absence and the expected length of the absence. (A follow-up communication may be required, should the leave be extended.)

Policy developed by: Louise Smailes and Courtney Turner
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